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JORDAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (JTD)

**EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL BUYER NETWORK THROUGH
TRADESHOWS AND ROAD SHOWS WORKSHOP
JULY 2010
FINAL**

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JORDAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (JTD)

**23200 EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL BUYER NETWORK
THROUGH TRADESHOWS AND ROAD SHOWS WORKSHOP**

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ACRONYMS

MOTA	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
JTD	Jordan Tourism Development Project
WTM	World Travel Market
JHA	Jordan Hotel Association
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW

The objective of this project was to plan and deliver a two-day training session on maximizing effectiveness of trade event participation for trade shows, road shows and sales calls. Using World Travel Market (WTM) 2010 as a case study, the intent was to enable participants to gain necessary knowledge, skills transfer, training and practical application that would aid in upgrading their international trade event professionalism and performance.

Prior to the two-day training session, interviews were conducted with local tourism professionals. Led by Sandra Willett, Amjad Sawalha and this consultant, an overview of these interviews is contained in the next section of this report.

Following the end of the formal training sessions, this consultant included optional one-on-one sessions with interested participants at various levels of tourism experience including leadership from within the private sector and industry association. The focus of these “private consultations” was customized and based on the specific needs of the individual who pursued this follow-up opportunity. Topics discussed were either centered on or related extensions of those included within the training sessions. The length of these individual meetings ranged from 20 minutes to almost 3 hours, and each participant expressed appreciation for the unique opportunity.

Further, as an added benefit to participants, consultant contact information has been shared as a measure to support further independent consultation and advisory guidance in preparation for participation in World Travel Market 2010 or otherwise. An email welcoming interaction has been sent to all participants.

INTERVIEWS

Prior to the training sessions, this consultant was engaged in a number of interviews with various travel professionals from a broad spectrum of tourism organizations in Amman. There were two primary reasons for holding these sessions: first, to assess and foster interest in attending the training sessions, and second to gain relevant insight as to how to best drive and position the upcoming presentation. There were many topical and format-based issues discussed and addressed, which ultimately impacted the presentation content and style of delivery.

Presentation adjustment occurred in the 24-hour period prior to the training sessions based on the valuable input garnered during these discussions. All interviews were arranged, attended and introduced by Sandra Willett and/or Amjad Sawalha of The Jordan Tourism Development Project (Siyaha).

Following is a summary of interviews that took place in Amman:

1 July 2010

Raed Al Badri, Chairman
Handcraft Producers Association

Nabith S. Riyal, General Manager
Plaza Tours

Muhannad Malhas, Managing Director
A & K

Ziad Fostuz, Director of Sales & Marketing
Le Meridien Hotel

Jamal Zaatarah, Assistant General Manager
Zaatarah & Co.

2 July 2010

Seif Saudi, Managing Partner
Jordan Select Tours

Yaser Malhas, Sales & Marketing Manager
Pan East Tours

Ibrahim F. Zuraiqi, Chairman of the Board,
Jordanian Handicrafts Producers & Trader Association

Issa Gammoh, Secretary General
Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities (MOTA)

Nayef Al Fayez, Managing Director
Jordan Tourism Board

Meg E. Evans, Country Director of Sales & Marketing
Amman Marriott Hotel

BEST PRACTICES FOR TRADE SHOW PLANNING & PARTICIPATION

Tourism industry Best Practice guidance, proffered through this consultant's professional experience and expertise, was seeded throughout the two-day training session via both academic activity description and "real-world" example. Topic areas in which best practices for approach and implementation were covered included trade show examination and evaluation, event preparation, planning, and participation, unified destination representation, international and cross-cultural business practice, and World Travel Market case study exercises and discussions.

A highlight example of these discussions included description, analysis and implementation guidance regarding unified destination representation wherein the Canadian trade event delegation's approach was studied for potential emulation. The details offered described a roadmap to unify Jordan's delegation in presence, message and in support of overall brand image. Response to this session was mixed in that some long-standing concerns were discussed during individual interviews with regard to aggressive tactics pertaining to client relationships. Ultimately, the on-site response to the topic held a positive outcome and it was believed by many participants that the collective Jordanian team could follow suit in similar fashion in collaboration with representative leadership.

Personal experiences from across decades of recognized Best Practice industry approaches were consistently extended from a "buyer's" perspective, yet with appropriate insight for specific "seller's" application. Participant queries received "insider" response perspectives representing that of a long-time international buyer and tourism association leader.

TRAINING SESSION FEEDBACK AND PREPAREDNESS

The participant audience was comprised of individuals with various levels of tourism industry and trade event experience. Despite this varied cross-section from the Jordanian tourism professional community, all were highly engaged and attentive. Some audience members were more participatory than others, however it can be broadly stated that this variance is common among any group and in nearly any professional training seminar setting.

Feedback from participants and USAID/Siyaha colleagues suggested that the project objective was successfully and wholly fulfilled based in part on the presentation design, content and related adaptation requirements discussed during the immediately preceding days. Virtually all feedback received from participants regarding the training sessions was positive, having been expressed both verbally, during session breaks, at each day's end, and in writing via email correspondence that followed the event's conclusion. There has not been any negative feedback received from participants to date.

It is this consultant's professional opinion that all members of the participant group are well prepared to engage in enhanced trade event activities, albeit still at varied levels based on their current professional experience within and beyond trade event interaction. Further, given the prospect for individualized consultative advice offered as topic follow-up in preparation for potential World Travel Market attendance in November, 2010, there is ample opportunity for those with on-going questions or concerns to attend to their specific needs and gaps in this regard.

ONE-ON-ONE AND OTHER FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

As previously noted, following the end of the final training session on Day 2, all participants were afforded the opportunity to engage with this consultant in one-on-one meetings. The intent of this activity was to offer personalized response, input and guidance to expressed questions, comments and requests that were related to reviewed subject matter and other appropriate business-enhancing topics.

These individualized sessions were dedicated to responding to questions in greater depth, and on a more specific basis than could otherwise have been obtained during the large group session. Some of the conversations resulted in requests for further, post-event communication which will be accommodated upon their individual requests.

In addition to holding four on-site meetings with local professionals interested in obtaining further techniques for closing sales at WTM, this consultant also met with Ziad Sahuri of Rida International Travel & Tourism. Mr. Sahuri was particularly interested in reaching the US inbound market that would be considered “new business” so as avoid employing more obtrusive techniques to procure existing business from competitors. Jamal Zaatarah was also interested in new business from the United States and sought expanded information regarding the trade shows that were mentioned during the presentation that focus on capturing the American market. This consultant also met with Dima Hamdan, the newly appointed Marketing & Statistics Manager for the Jordan Hotel Association, at the Siyaha offices. She was interested in discussing the potential components of a marketing plan for JHA. This detailed discussion lasted approximately three hours.

Individual consultative services will continue to be available to participants via email through the end of the contracted period which coincides with the launch World Travel Market 2010. As previously mentioned in this report, this consultant has forwarded a reminder message with specific contact information to all participants with an invitation to engage in further dialogue leading up to WTM 2010.

CONCLUSION

The culmination of the delivered work as described in the USAID Jordan Tourism Development Project Scope of Work, including the development and preparation of the two-day training course entitled “Expanding International Travel Buyer Network through Trade Shows and Road Shows”, the two-days of local tourism professional interviews prior to the training sessions, the on-site follow-up interviews, and the forthcoming participant follow-up interaction has provided a substantial, beneficial and results-oriented training foundation for all attendees.

I extend my gratitude and appreciation to Sandra Willet, Amjad Sawalha as well as the many Siyaha colleagues with whom I came in contact throughout the course of this project. All stakeholders have been very professional and supportive of my efforts, which has been most appreciated.